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LUKE

GREEK PHYSICIAN AND HISTORIAN

BY

JOHN A. SCOTT

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
1930

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JOHN C. SHAFFER FOUNDATION

FOR PROMOTION

OF THE

APPRECIATION OF THE LIFE,

CHARACTER,

TEACHINGS AND INFLUENCE

OF JESUS

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JOHN A. SCOTT

JOHN C. SHAFFER PROFESSOR OF GREEK
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

TO

TIMOTHY PRESCOTT FROST,

PASTOR FOR FOURTEEN YEARS

OF THE

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OF EVANSTON,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

Unaccessioned

PREFACE

. . .

THE *basis for this little book is an address given at the First Presbyterian Church of Evanston on the last Sunday of April, 1930, and was one of a series of thirty similar addresses given during the year on Christ and the Gospels. As it was prepared with no thought of publication, I am compelled to rely on the notes of a stenographer whom a friend had provided. Much has been changed, some omitted, much added to what was then spoken.*

Mr. Shaffer kindly invited me to publish this talk on Luke as part of the series promoted by the John C. Shaffer Foundation and asked me to make it as nearly as possible a companion to the book already published, "Socrates and Christ."

I wish to thank Mr. Theodore W. Koch, Librarian of Northwestern University, and his able assistants who most generously undertook the thankless task of preparing this address for publication.

It is impossible for me to express adequately my great appreciation of those faithful and encouraging members of my Sunday School class who made the time spent in preparing these addresses hours of delight and not of drudgery.

Any one, not a theologian, must hesitate to add another to the long list of books in this field. In publishing this address, I have reluctantly followed the advice of friends whose judgment in other affairs I have never known to err.

JOHN A. SCOTT

Northwestern University,
September, 1930.

LUKE
THE GREEK PHYSICIAN

. .

"Who builds a church to God and not to Fame
Will never mark the marble with his name."

THE man of whom I speak today built his church to God. He never mentions his own name in his writings and were it not for the fact that his companion, Paul, in a letter to the Colossians said, "Luke, the beloved physician, greets you," and in a letter to Timothy, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . . only Luke is with me," and once again to Philemon, "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers," his name would not have appeared in the New Testament. But from these hints we know in what age he lived, where he labored, what was his profession and his race, and we have almost unlimited knowledge of the century to which he belongs. And this is vast infinity in comparison with what we know of Homer. We know of many

people who saw Luke and whom Luke saw, and we certainly know his name. But of Homer we do not know his native city, nor a single companion or contemporary, nor with certainty anyone within three hundred years of the time in which he lived; while his name first appears at least four hundred years after his death. Yet the libraries are full of books on Homer. By the help of the knowledge of Luke's contemporaries and his century, also with a justifiable amount of imagination, I shall try to reconstruct for you the life of Luke.

He was born in a Greek home. The shortness of his name justifies the presumption that his parents had been slaves; but this was only an inconvenience, not a dishonor. Aesop was a slave all his life; Plato was once sold as a slave, and the great Roman poet Horace tells with pride that although born of a liberated slave, this former slave above everything else was eager for his son's education. The lowly rank of Luke's parents made possible for him only one avenue of great achievement, the avenue of learning. He early learned music, he could play on several instruments, and he could sing. There was in his town a Greek theatre. While a boy he sang in the boys' chorus and acted boys' parts. As he grew older he acted in tragedy

or in comedy the part of some woman, queen or slave. Later he may, perhaps, have taken the part of a king or a great warrior. He could probably repeat from memory several entire Greek plays. He could instantly quote any passage in Homer. At fourteen he could speak Greek so well that people who heard him talk knew that he was Greek; and Latin so well that people who heard him speak it might think this his mother tongue. In this period every man knew two languages. Four hundred years before Christ no person except professional interpreters knew more than one. Herodotus travelled widely in Persia and wrote a history of that country. He said that he had made great discoveries about Persian names, but the fact that he told what these discoveries were proves that he knew nothing whatever of the Persian language. In the works of Greek writers of the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ no quotations appear which are in a foreign language. I cannot recall the name of a single man of that era who knew two languages, except such men as Ctesias, the Greek physician, who attended the King of Persia, or the interpreters who followed Persian generals for the purpose of conveying commands to troops of different nationalities. Even Xenophon, who went with a Persian army from Sardis almost to

Babylon, does not display the knowledge of a single Persian word. The language of Italy at that time was essentially unknown in Greece and the lands adjoining the Eastern Mediterranean. Just as I can recall no man of 400 B. C. who knew more than one language, so I can recall the name of no man of the first century who knew less than two. It is only an accident that Cicero, Vergil, and Horace wrote in Latin, while their neighbors, teachers, and closest friends wrote in Greek. In the year 70 of our era Jerusalem was destroyed and Judea was as much abandoned as the old American frontier towns which, having prospered in the days of the stagecoach, gave up their lives because a railroad built a station a few miles away.

Suppose that Jesus had come four hundred years earlier, and had told his followers to preach the Gospel to all the world? Not one of these could have spoken outside of Judea. Suppose he had come one hundred years later? The isolation of Judea would have made a missionary movement impossible. Had he come to Bethlehem four hundred years earlier we could, humanly speaking, never have heard his name, or had he come a hundred years later his message would have been as mute as a lark at midnight. You may say that this was only an accident, but I call it Providence.

When Luke was fourteen his family was forced to decide on a career for this musical, educated, brilliant young man. The avenues of greatness open to a Greek youth were athletics, rhetoric or medicine. Inasmuch as athletics involved so great an expense and so little income, the lowly condition of Luke's family made an athletic career impossible. His love for nature and his sympathy with men made the choice of medicine inevitable. Hence his parents and near relatives agreed to join in financing a medical education for this promising boy. He studied at the Island of Cos, at Rhodes and at Athens. Here he became acquainted with boys of his own and of higher social position. Since the medical profession was highly honored under the Caesars,—so highly honored that all physicians, whatever their rank by birth, were given Roman citizenship, young Luke could then associate and did associate with the best born and best bred young men of the Roman Empire. Here he formed friendships with young men from Italy, from Alexandria, from Egypt, from Byzantium, and from Antioch. Here he met a gentleman of wealth and learning from Antioch named Theophilus. They became fast friends. When Luke had finished his career some of his associates went to Rome to become physicians in the household

of the Caesars,—some to Alexandria to become physicians among the successors of the Ptolemies. However, the friendship of Theophilus and Luke's confidence in his wisdom decided him to commence his professional career in Antioch.

His office had probably much the same kind of furnishings as you would now find in any first-class doctor's office, except that Luke had no watch and no thermometer. But he had been so trained that by his touch he could detect the rise and fall of fever. On the wall of his office there hung the words of the oath exacted by Hippocrates from all Greek physicians, part of which is: "The method I adopt shall be for the benefit of the patients to the best of my power and judgment, not for their injury or for any wrongful purposes. I will not give a deadly drug to anyone though it be asked of me, nor will I lead the way in counsel, and likewise I will never assist a woman to prevent conception nor aid in abortion. But I will keep my life and my art in purity and holiness. Whatsoever house I enter I will enter for the benefit of the sick, refraining from all wrongdoing and corruption. Whatsoever things I see or hear concerning the life of men, in my attendance on the sick, or even apart from my attendance, which ought not to be mentioned, I shall

keep silence thereon, counting such things to be as religious secrets."

Perhaps a relative had worked in purple threads on a papyrus background this motto from the works of Hippocrates: "Where love of man is, there also is love of science." And maybe also some friend had hung up this sentence from the writings of the Greek physician Herophilus: "Science and art have equally nothing to show, strength is incapable of effort, wealth useless, eloquence powerless, if health be wanting." Think what a debt physicians of all ages and of all lands owe to those Greeks who at the very start made this profession so honorable! It has taken the profession of law three thousand years to create an ideal which Greek physicians gave to medicine at its beginning.

Soon the people of Antioch began to talk of the skill and especially the character of this young Greek doctor. For it has been my observation that character is far more valuable to men, even in a professional way, than mere skill; and that they are rarely separated.

At the same time that Luke was beginning his practice in Antioch another young man came to that city. He was a Jew and he joined in the organization of a society which began to call itself Christian. Peter had

come from Jerusalem to observe and later to become a member of this organization, and Peter had dined with members of this society, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. James, the leader of the reactionary part of the Christian Church, had heard in Jerusalem that Peter was bringing great disgrace upon the cause by joining with Christians who were also Gentiles. He sent to Antioch, learned that Peter had committed this unpardonable offense, was horrified, and so cowed Peter with his rage and his influence that Peter refused to sit at table with any non-Jew Christians. This decision broke the heart of that young Jew. He determined to see a physician and such was his state of mind that he did not care whether or not this physician were of his own race. He sought the office of the young Greek doctor, of whose skill his neighbors were so pleased to speak. In utter discouragement he entered. As he walked in, the doctor knew at once that he was a Jew; but the visitor spoke Luke's own language with such classic accents and enunciation that Luke suspected he might after all be a Greek. Luke picked up his tablet and asked the patient for his name. He answered: "My name is Paul." Luke questioned: "Where do you live?" He replied: "I am now at Antioch, but I was born in Tarsus." "What seems to

be the trouble?" The patient replied: "I do not know. I am discouraged, buffeted on every hand. I call my trouble a thorn in the flesh." Here was a new disease for the young doctor, and he asked Paul to describe more in detail his ailment. As the patient began to talk he wandered back over the years and told of a journey that he had made to Damascus. He told how suddenly there had shone round about him a light from heaven, and how he had heard a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He told how he had risen, trembling and astonished, and for three days had been without sight, unable to eat or to drink. He told how an old man had come to him when in that condition and had assured him that he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of the despised Jesus before Kings and Gentiles. He told how Ananias had said that he was to be honored by suffering great things for that name.

Luke was no specialist. He not only healed diseases of the body, but also diseases of the mind. He knew at once that this was a mental case. He said to this patient: "What you need is rest. You ought to go off by yourself and think only of pleasant things. Eat simple food and forget the world—forget that journey to Damascus." But the patient replied: "I cannot, for

it would be false to the vision." The doctor tried to explain to him what it would mean for a man in his condition to start out alone; but the patient replied: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me, and I must go. I can trust in Him." Luke, true to his profession, refused to abandon this patient to what seemed certain and permanent insanity, and he replied: "If you must go, then I will go with you." And he did. He closed the doors of that office and, so far as we know, he never entered them again.

From this point nothing is left to the imagination. Historical facts begin. We are dealing now with authenticated history. Luke never deserted this patient, and left him only for brief periods. He thought only of the patient and never of himself. Never could one imagine in the description of the storm which wrecked the ship that took Paul as a prisoner to Italy, or in the narrative of Paul's treatment as a prisoner in Rome, that Luke himself was on that ship, incurred the same dangers, and underwent the same difficulties and miseries in Rome. Such total and absolute self-forgetfulness, such devotion to another, is, so far as I know, unparalleled in the history of mankind. Luke early conceived the idea of writing a story of the life of this wondrous patient. But Paul had said: "For me

to live is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ." "The unsearchable riches of Christ." "Justified by faith in Christ." Luke's patient regarded himself as nothing, but "Christ as all in all." It was perfectly clear to Luke that the biography of his patient must be preceded by the story of Him whom that patient worshipped, and in whom he lived. Accordingly, while Paul was in prison for those years near Jerusalem, and as other opportunities came, Luke visited the scenes made famous by Jesus. He became acquainted intimately with those who had known Him,—so intimately that he wrote the following words to that old friend Theophilus: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Hence Luke felt it necessary to put in writing the story of Jesus of Nazareth before he undertook the story of his own buffeted patient. He wrote two books: the Gospel of Jesus Christ, named for himself, "St. Luke"; and the "Acts of the Apostles." These books were immediately adopted by the Christian Church as parts of that collection of new documents which were to make up the New Testament. They were quoted almost imme-

diately by Justin Martyr, who was born during the life of St. John right next to Sychar, where Jesus met the woman at the well. I like to think of Justin Martyr as one of those who became a follower of Jesus because of that woman who left her water-pot and went her way to the city and said: "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did—is not this the Christ?" A pupil of Justin Martyr's, Tatian, fled from Rome because of the persecutions that took place in Rome about the year 150 of our era, and took with him four manuscripts which were marked Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. He united the story of these four gospels into one which he called "Composed of Four." He translated it into the Syriac; centuries later it was translated into Arabic, and later all versions were supposed to be lost. But in our own day an Arabic copy made in the fourteenth century was found in Egypt, was carried to Italy, and was sent to the Vatican where it was read by that remarkable scholar, Ciasco, such a scholar as the Catholic Church has in an astonishingly large number.

It is now established beyond a doubt that in the year 150 of our era, when Tatian fled from Rome, there were but four Gospels, and that those four Gospels were exactly the same as the four Gospels we now

have; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Since this Syriac-Arabic version was never in touch with the Western Church, it must belong to the time when Tatian left Rome, thus utterly exploding the theory advanced by such men as J. Middleton Murry, Emil Ludwig, and others, that the Gospel of John was a late composition, or that any changes had been made in any of the Gospels since 150 A.D. I have read all of this work of Tatian and every verse of our Luke is there in exactly the present form except those verses in Luke which seem to duplicate verses in the other Gospels, because it was Tatian's purpose not to repeat anything that was told in more than one Gospel. Hence, for example, having told a parable as given in Matthew, he would not repeat it as given in Luke. Consequently the four Gospels Tatian combined have about one thousand fewer verses than the present text of our four Gospels. I find that every verse in John is in this Gospel as known in 150 A.D. except the story of the woman taken in adultery. The method by which this story of the woman taken in adultery got into our Bible is very simple. There must have been many incidents told about Jesus and sentences spoken by him that were current in the first and second centuries but were not in our Gospels, since Paul quotes as the

words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," words not found in any of the four Gospels. No doubt some scribe, wishing to preserve the story of the woman taken in adultery, wrote it along the margin. As ancient manuscripts had no footnotes and no appendix, there was no other place in which to preserve outside information. A later scribe would think that this marginal story was intended to be part of the whole and would add it to the narrative. There was no intention to deceive. It was simply an error of the scribe in copying as part of the text that which was intended to be a marginal comment. With that exception we know that the Gospel of John was an accepted part of the New Testament at 150 of our era—already accepted, hence it must have been of a considerably earlier date—a date that can hardly be later than the death of the beloved disciple himself. Men like Middleton Murry, Emil Ludwig, and their followers say that the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels would have been horrified to think that he would ever be worshipped. But it was the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels who said: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

"But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

"But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the Temple."

"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

"But after I am risen again I will go before you unto Galilee."

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

"The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men and they shall kill him and after he is killed he shall rise the third day."

"Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me but Him that sent me."

"Forbid him not for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part."

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

When the followers of Jesus protested that a woman had wasted an alabaster box of ointment upon him when it might have been sold for money, he said: "Let her alone. Why trouble ye the woman? Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Strange conduct and stranger words from one who would have been horrified had he known that he was later to be worshipped. And when the High Priest asked him, "Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?" Jesus said: "I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Again on the cross Jesus said to the thief: "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." And then again after he had risen he said to his disciples that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

All these sayings are from the Synoptic Gospels and are not influenced by the Gospel of John. The four Gospels see the same Jesus but from different distances and at different angles. Not only do we have the evidence of Justin Martyr and Tatian that the Gospels were as we have them immediately after 100 A.D., but we have the discovery of another Catholic scholar, Muratori, the great librarian at Milan. Writing material was so costly in the Middle Ages that many times we find a famous manuscript has been covered by other writing, such as fables or business accounts. This great scholar, Muratori, found written in poor Latin under the writing of an eighth century manuscript, a list of the books of the New Testament. The style of the writing of this discovered manuscript shows that it was written about the time of Tatian, perhaps 160 A.D. It contains a list of the then accepted books of the New Testament. It gives the names of the four Gospels exactly as we have them. It discusses the differences between Mark, Luke, John and Matthew. It says that the fourth Gospel was written by John at the request of the other apostles, and also on the request of the bishops. Hence, we have another absolutely final proof that as early as 160 of our era the Gospels were exactly as we have them. My dear friend, J. A. Kleist,

a Jesuit scholar, called my attention to a little pamphlet which John Donovan, also a Jesuit, had written regarding the collections of speeches supposed to be found in Matthew, the so-called "sources" or Q, and he shows beyond the possibility of a doubt that the Matthew we now have is none other than the Matthew that has existed from the beginning; that all the arguments about the sources and speeches collected by Matthew are due to the failure to comprehend and properly translate a simple sentence in Papias. He has so demolished the whole theory of the slow and gradual development of Matthew that there is not enough left of the theory to give it a burial. It is perfectly astounding to me that some of these Jesuits will spend their lives in apparent obscurity and then suddenly appear with a twenty or thirty-page document which confounds some seemingly well-established theory of criticism or of scholarship.

I want to make the following prophecy. In a few years there will not be a single scholar of any standing in the world who will doubt that Matthew was written by Matthew, Mark by Mark, Luke by Luke, John by John, and that the Gospels were from the very beginning in all essentials exactly as we now have them. I base this prophecy on what has happened in

the last twenty years in the kindred field of Homeric criticism. About twenty years ago so competent a scholar as Professor Seymour, of Yale University, could say that he did not know a single scholar of any standing who believed in the unity of Homer. One of the greatest German professors of the last century said that a person who did not believe that the Homeric poems were put together from diverse smaller poems composed in many ages, was incompetent either to read Homer or the book the professor was then writing. Professor Wright's *History of Greek Literature* (1907), says that "there are now no believers in the originality or unity of Homer." The universal opinion was that Homer was the work of many ages and many hands and was subjected to constant changes until about 500 B.C. In 1911 a young unknown American scholar published a modest paper of about ten pages showing certain errors of the higher criticism as applied to Homer. To this young writer it came as a great surprise that Andrew Lang, the famous scholar and essayist, wrote an article on this little pamphlet for the *Morning Post* of London, in which he said: "I am convinced that this little pamphlet will be the death blow not only to higher criticism of Homer, but to the higher criticism of the Bible as well, since the

criticism of the Bible depends upon the assumption of the truth of the higher criticism of Homer."

Eleven years later the great scholar, Professor Paul Shorey of the University of Chicago wrote: "Of all the higher criticisms applied to Homer I am willing to say there is not one in which I will not undertake to find, not incidental oversights, but misinterpretations seriously affecting the main line of argument. I will meet the higher critic in any publication whose editor will give us space." Recently Professor Roy C. Flickinger, editor of the *Classical Journal*, the most widely read classical publication in the world, said: "Now there are no higher critics of Homer. Everyone believes the Iliad and the Odyssey represent the unchanged creation of a single poet. I cannot think of another instance in any field of literary history where such a change has been made in so short a time."

Practically every history of Greek literature that has been written or revised in the last ten years has accepted the theory that the poetry of Homer comes to us essentially unchanged. Professor Schmid of the University of Tübingen, the very birthplace of higher criticism, has completely changed his history of Greek literature to conform to this theory of the preservation of the original poetry of Homer.

As Andrew Lang saw so keenly, the higher criticism of the Bible depended on the axiomatic truth of the higher criticism of Homer, and with the universal abandonment by competent scholars of the higher criticism of Homer, higher criticism of the New Testament is left without a place to stand. I wish to repeat the challenge of Professor Shorey which he made regarding Homer, substituting merely for the word Homer the words New Testament. In thirty years of constant, untiring study, I have not found a single argument advanced by skeptical higher criticism in either Greek, Latin, English, or the New Testament, that does not rest upon the misunderstanding of some simple and significant truth.

Ever since Schliemann began his epoch-making excavations at Troy and Mycenae sixty years ago, scholars have been astounded at the absolute truth and unfailing reliability of early and long-continued tradition. Independent of all the other arguments, many and powerful as they are, the tradition that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the Gospels bearing their names is to my mind final and absolute proof.

Twenty years ago scholars believed there was no doubt that most books of classical and apostolic times were in a state of constant flux; that verses were added

or removed at the whim of the audience or at the pleasure of the speaker; that the fact that a poem passed under the name of Homer, an oration under the name of Cicero, or a Gospel under the name of John, was no proof of authorship. They believed also that Homer had been changed to give honor to Athens, or passages had been inserted to please Pisistratus; that Herodotus was a forger to flatter the public of Pericles, and that John was written to adapt the Gospel to the shifting beliefs of theology. Such beliefs were known as higher criticism and they were in absolute control. Today there is not a higher critic of any real standing among scholars in any part of the earth, and the following two principles are regarded as axiomatic in every university of the highest rank. I. There is not a single important work in Greek or Latin which is not the work of the person whose name it bears. II. No changes have been made in any important work since that work left the hand of its creator, except such errors as were inevitable when books were copied by scribes who often were absent-minded and sometimes were careless.

There is not a single authenticated example of fraud or wilful tampering with the text; but we do know that Onomacritus, the favorite of Pisistratus, was ban-

ished because he added a verse to the poetry of Musaeus; and that Lycon, the comic actor and the friend of Alexander, was fined the equivalent of one hundred thousand dollars for interpolating a single line in a comedy. It is remarkable that higher critics of the New Testament and of Greek and Latin writers never saw the bearing of this exile of Onomacritus and of this heavy fine on their problem. Public sentiment among the Greeks from Homer to this minute would have ruined any man who changed a chorus in Sophocles or a verse in the Gospel of St. John.

There is one great advantage which the New Testament can claim over all the writings of classical Greece and that is the age and excellent condition of its manuscripts. Homer probably lived not far from 1000 B.C., yet the oldest manuscripts now extant containing the Iliad and the Odyssey are hardly older than the tenth century of the Christian era. Hence we see that almost two thousand years intervene between Homer and the oldest complete manuscript of his works which we possess.

Most of the poetry of Pindar, who died about 450 B.C., has been lost, but the oldest manuscript of the poetry which has survived was written very near the year 1150 A.D. In other words there is an interval of

about 1600 years between Pindar and the date of his oldest manuscript. Demosthenes died in 322 B.C., while the oldest manuscript of any complete oration which we have is hardly earlier than 900 A.D. Those selected are the ones of which we have especially old and reliable manuscripts.

With the New Testament we are in another world, for we have two manuscripts which were certainly written before 340, perhaps as early as 325 A.D. The New Testament probably received its final form about 100 A.D., hence we have manuscripts of the New Testament which are removed from the compilation of that book by little more than two centuries, while in the case of the greatest writers of Greece the average interval is more than eight times as great, or sixteen centuries.

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, said that in excellence, in antiquity, and in closeness of time to the original issue, the manuscripts of the New Testament are in a class entirely by themselves. Why in the face of this unbroken tradition is there a huge problem concerning authorship of the Gospels? The answer is simple: A little over one hundred years ago there arose the tradition that in order to receive a higher degree one must write a book; then

it soon followed that all promotions in universities and in schools of theology depended on producing more books. What was a young theological student whose subject was the Gospels to do? He must either find an old problem or create a new one. The whole problem of the origin of the Gospels is due to the law that the production of a book is the unchanging condition of graduation or of promotion in theological institutions. That the author did or did not believe his own theories was hardly an incident, the real issue was the creation of a book.

Well-meaning Christians often say that we must take the Gospels on faith. It takes about as much faith for me to believe the Gospels as it does for me to believe the binomial theorem or the multiplication table. Where knowledge enters agnosticism flees. Indeed the very word "agnostic" is simple Greek for "one who has no knowledge." The word may be prophetic, or only an accident, but if an accident "'tis an accident that heaven provides."

In understanding and interpreting Luke I have but one advantage over the person who knows no Greek, and that is this: My knowledge of Greek gives me an elevation from which I can better appreciate the towering worth, beauty, and accuracy of the King James

version. Anyone who can read this version has everything at his command. Professor Gildersleeve, who made Johns Hopkins University famous, and is by common consent the greatest Greek scholar whom America has produced, after comparing the King James version with all the various versions appearing before 1920, pronounced the King James version on the side of Greek the greatest accomplishment of the English-speaking race. It is the opinion of competent scholars that Professor Lane Cooper of Cornell University is one of the leading English scholars of America. I wrote and asked him how the beliefs of Professor Gildersleeve appealed to him and he replied on May 12, 1930: "I also believe the 'King James version is the greatest accomplishment of the English-speaking race.' Moreover, the late Professor Albert S. Cook, of Yale, said even better things of that great version." However, that is enough proof for my purpose, as all I wish to do is to combat the theory that a person needs anything other than this matchless version to comprehend the message of the Gospels.

A recent writer has said: "Luke was no historian in the modern sense of the word." I agree with that statement. Shakespeare was not a poet in the modern sense of that word. Raphael was not a painter in the

modern sense of that word. But Luke was an historian in the same sense that Thucydides was. Even Macaulay, when he read Thucydides, felt so humble that it was hard to keep him from destroying what he himself had written. Sir William Ramsay when a young man, simply as an archaeologist, semi-agnostic at that, went to Asia Minor to study the ruins of that historical region, and he soon discovered that whenever you could find a topographical statement in Luke about the location of cities, streams, or anything else, it was always absolutely correct. And when I was a young man Sir William said to me: "I regard Luke as the greatest historian who has ever lived, save only Thucydides," a statement he has repeatedly made in print.

I have read Luke many times in his wonderful Greek and Thucydides many times in his difficult Greek. Thucydides' Greek is so difficult that even Professor Mahaffy of the University of Dublin admitted that there were many passages in Thucydides he could not understand; indeed, he wondered whether Thucydides understood them himself. But the Greek of Luke is so limpid, so direct, and so convincing, that on this score, and this score alone, I place him ahead of Thucydides. In my judgment, Luke is the world's greatest historian.

Luke is the only Greek, that is non-Hebrew, writer of the New Testament—the only writer of the New Testament with any historical sense, and with all historians the first essential is dates. Who could guess from John, from Mark, from Matthew, when Jesus was born, or when he began his ministry? The second chapter of Luke says: "And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." But one or two centuries later Tertullian asserted that Saturninus and not Cyrenius was governor at that time. Here was a great contradiction. Just recently Sir William Ramsay found an inscription on a stone which shows that Cyrenius and not Saturninus was governor of this region at the time of the birth of Christ, proving that Luke was correct.

In the first verses of the seventeenth chapter of the Acts the story is told how Jason, when arrested in Thessalonica, was taken before officials called in Greek the Politarchs. No other reference to the word Politarch is found in any ancient writing. Here certainly Luke had blundered and had used the wrong word in referring to the officials at Thessalonica. But recently an inscription has been found among the ruins of that city

in which a decree is signed by the order of the Politarchs, showing again that Luke was no historian "in the modern sense of that word"; showing again his amazing accuracy.

The next important date in the life of Jesus was his entrance into his ministry when baptized by John the Baptist. Three Hebrew writers and one Greek writer tell of that event. When did it take place? Here is what Matthew says: "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea." You would hardly guess from Matthew that more than a month had elapsed since Jesus first came to Nazareth. Mark says: "John here baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. There went out unto him all the country of Judea and they of Jerusalem." You would not even guess the century by that reference. The other Jew, John, says: "John bare witness of him and cried saying —this was He of whom I spake." You couldn't guess the century from that. But what does the Greek doctor, the historian Luke say?

"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip

tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." And later he adds—"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age."—We could not even guess this date from the other three Gospels, but we could hardly err in estimating the date given by Luke. For it was just the time when the year 26 A.D. was changing to the year 27. Strange, in the face of this, that the early Church should have put the birth of Jesus so many years too late! We cannot be definite in saying how old Jesus was when he was "about thirty years of age." He might have been twenty-nine, thirty-one, or thirty-two. At least he was born before Herod died, which was in the year 4 B.C. Cyrenius became governor not later than 8 B.C. Hence, all we can say of the date of the birth of Jesus was that he must have been born after 8 B.C. and earlier than 4 B.C. Without Luke New Testament chronology would be practically impossible; through him we know that Jesus began his ministry between 26 and 27 A.D., and that he was crucified on the seventh day of April, the year 30 of our era.

Luke was not only a doctor, not only an historian,

but he was one of the world's greatest men of letters. His literary sense has preserved for us seventeen parables which without him would be absolutely unknown. These parables include the stories of Dives and Lazarus, the proud praying Pharisee and the humble publican, and the two noblest tales ever told—the story of the Good Samaritan and the story of the Prodigal Son.

Here a digression is necessary in order to answer these two questions: How did Luke know the facts which he gives and which are not found in any other Gospel? Can his evidence be trusted?

It must never be forgotten that because Luke was a Greek he had the Greek determination to get at the truth however hidden or remote that truth might be. In writing an account of the Persian war (one contingent of the Persian army was composed of Egyptians), Herodotus, the father of Greek history, recognized at once that the story of Egypt must be told and that story was connected with the annual rise and fall of the Nile. Since he could obtain no satisfactory interpretation of that phenomenon, in order to secure first-hand information he made the long and difficult trip all the way to the lower cataract of the Nile. While Herodotus was in Egypt, he learned of a cer-

tain religious connection with Tyre. Simply to settle that point he made the hard voyage to Tyre, but once there, he found that he must go to distant Thasos, so to Thasos he went. One can hardly over-estimate the difficulties encountered in all these journeys made merely in order to ascertain the truth of a problem which comprises only a brief paragraph.

After the younger Cyrus was slain almost in sight of Babylon, the Greeks made their way homeward through an unknown land and in the face of countless foes. A young man in the Greek army recorded in his diary the size of the streams crossed, the distances between them, the cities which they passed, and the contour of the land. Though this was the only time that young man ever saw this region, the British found in their advance to Bagdad during the World War, that this diary was a more reliable guide to the part of the Tigris River below Nineveh than were their own war maps.

Because Luke lived in this atmosphere of keen observation and of taking infinite pains in the search for truth, he knew how to search for the truth and was able to recognize it when found. There are no qualifying phrases, "it is rumored," or "it is said," in his writings. He put in nothing of which he felt there was

the slightest doubt; hence he could write to his friend, Theophilus, "That thou mightest know the certainty of these things."

Books and printed matter are so cheap now that every one has the opportunity to read; but until the invention of printing each book was an independent creation, copied slowly by hand, while the material on which books were written was most costly. It is estimated that the Bible manuscript discovered on Mt. Sinai by Tischendorf required the skins of not less than seven hundred antelopes. The labor of getting, dressing, and preparing all these skins is immeasurable. The cost of books made readers few but memorizers many. While in our day the people read much and remember little, in Luke's day the people read little, but remembered much.

Most early literature had survived in memory many ages before it existed in writing. When the Grimm brothers collected their Fairy Tales they found them preserved only in the memory of simple people, but so carefully kept alive that each one of those illiterate people repeated every tale in exactly the words used by his neighbors.

Nearer to our time the Finnish epic, the Kalevala, has been transferred from the memory of the Finnish

peasants into a written epic. This phenomenon of great masses of literature, accurate to the minutest details, being carried in the memory, is found everywhere except where printing has made books cheap and libraries have made them accessible. In antiquity, a library was a place where books were preserved, rather than a place where they were read.

This is exactly what Luke found when he visited the scenes of Jesus' life and ministry, for he met men who could repeat word for word the sayings and parables spoken by Jesus. If Luke heard from ten different men the parable of the Prodigal Son, he probably heard not a single verbal difference. In his search, Luke must have traversed not many years after the crucifixion and the resurrection the very regions hallowed by Jesus. On every hand he found the same unvarying testimony. Luke never says, "some say this, others that" but he preserves only that concerning which he was convinced there could be no doubt. He surely questioned often those who knew Jesus best. Indeed, Sir William Ramsay is certain that it was from Mary's own lips that he heard the story of the annunciation and the divine birth. Paul said that Jesus had been seen after his resurrection by five hundred brethren at one time. There can be no doubt that Luke, so far as it

was possible, questioned every one of those five hundred. After all this questioning he never had a misgiving regarding the truth of what he had heard.

The Gospel of Luke is based on the unerring memory of those who were familiar with all the facts, on the memory of men then living who had known Jesus and who remembered his very words, and Luke never reports a variant. Never has another history been written under such truth-favoring conditions; where personal prejudices, doubtful testimony, or contradictory traditions have played so small a part.

Without Luke we would never have heard the Angel Song. Without Luke we would never have had a report from a competent man of science on the birth from a virgin. If Jesus had two human parents, why did the shrewd physician never suspect that fact? He had none of the Messianic hopes for a leader born of a virgin, and that the arguments were sufficient to convince Doctor Luke shows that we are dealing with no ignorant, childish fancy. Without Luke we would never have known that the shepherds watched their flocks by night, or have known of the manger in Bethlehem where Jesus was born; or when he entered the ministry. Without Luke, the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and Dives and Lazarus,

would have vanished from the memory of man. Without Luke we would never have known "The man of sorrows sweat, as it were, great drops of blood," or that an angel came from heaven to Gethsemane and strengthened him. Without Luke we would never have known that Jesus said to the thief on the cross: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Without Luke we would never have known the words: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Without Luke we would never have known the words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Without Luke we would never have known of these men who went from the prison rejoicing that they were "deemed worthy to suffer shame for His name." We would never have known of Stephen who, when stoned, prayed for his persecutors, saying: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." We would never have known of that journey to Damascus, of the address on Mars Hill. Indeed, we would never have known of Paul at all. For we know only what Luke tells us about Paul, and where Luke stops there is silence. And it was because the Christian Church had once adopted the writings of Luke into the Christian Canon that it adopted also the letters of Paul. Without Luke's help as a physician, as a com-

panion and a friend, Paul could never have continued in the Christian ministry, and without Luke's pen the same grave that covered Paul's body would also have covered his name.

In my mind the most important event in the history of time took place on that day when a poor, sick, discouraged Jew went into the office of Luke, the Greek physician; with the single exception of that Friday afternoon when Jesus hung from the cross on Calvary.

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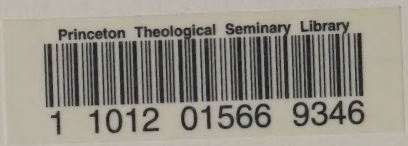
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